



SENATOR

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E-Newsletter - 10th District

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10th Legislative District

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2009 LEGISLATURE — WEEK TWO

I've been getting plenty of calls and e-mails during the second week of the 2009 Legislature from people all over the Puget Sound concerning the very early, preliminary ideas to make much-needed reforms at Washington State Ferries.

If you're reading this, then you most likely received an earlier e-mail with my response to some of these concerns — but if you did not get that earlier e-mail, then I invite you to visit my website at

<http://blog.senatedemocrats.wa.gov/haugen/ferry-facts/>.

If you have any additional questions or comments on the ferry system's proposed changes, you should contact Washington State Ferries to ensure that they are entered into the public record. They are collecting comments at wsfplanning@wsdot.wa.gov and via phone at **206 515-3411**.

Please also feel free to contact me by [e-mail](#) or via phone at **360 786-7618**.

In the meantime, here is a brief update on other happenings in the Legislature this week.

CORRECTION

We all make mistakes, and when I do I like to own up to it as soon as it's brought to my attention.

In yesterday's update – I mistakenly included Paul Thompson's name in my message about ferries and an essay that appeared in the South Whidbey Record.

Only Paul's wife, Paulette Becker, was the author of the editorial in question.

I apologize for the error in naming Paul in my response.

VISITORS

Thousands of people from all around our state come to visit the capitol when the Legislature is in session. Some of them come to lobby on behalf of specific issues or to celebrate a special occasion, while many others come just to see representative government in action.

This week, of course, we had an even more visitors than usual because of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The Legislature doesn't take either MLK Day or Presidents' Day off since we're in session — but we do hold observances to commemorate the people that those days are set aside to honor. In fact, those two holidays generally have the most number of people visiting the capitol to talk to the Legislature about issues of importance to them, since many people have the day off from work on those dates.

Meanwhile, my office was visited by a huge number of local visitors during the rest of the week, including local physical therapists Luke Summers, Craig London, Marty London and Amy Moe, pictured below.



I also had the opportunity to host a very special guest to the Senate this week — Leah Phipps from Coupeville High School, who came to participate in the Senate Page Program.



Leah is a sharp and motivated young woman, adopted from Ethiopia, who is enthusiastic and eager to learn. She's exploring a wide variety of possibilities for what she wants to do after she graduates from high school, including dentistry and engineering, but was fascinated by seeing how state government works and learning about the many roles government plays in our lives.

She has been very helpful to me and my colleagues and did a great job of helping out with the daily activities that make the legislative process function, as well as participating as a flag bearer during our opening ceremony this morning.

RURAL TRANSIT STOPS

Those of us who live in rural communities have a special appreciation for how different our way of life can be from people who live in suburbs or cities, and the simple fact is that rules which make sense for one type of community just don't work well in others.

That's especially true when it comes to something like mass transit. Being able to flag down a bus in downtown Seattle would never work, but it's something that seems completely appropriate for people in our area where bus stops are sometimes few and far between.

A "real" bus stop costs money to build bus pullouts and shelters, and we can't afford to build one every quarter mile along a rural route like Highway 20 or Highway 525 - but at the same time, we can't expect people who rely on mass transit to walk a few miles down that highway to a permanent bus stop.

Current laws restrict where community and para-transit vehicles can stop, but those laws don't offer enough flexibility to allow transit drivers use their good judgment in deciding that it's safe to pick someone up or to make a stop that drops someone off at a more convenient location.

I've introduced [Senate Bill 5180](#) to formalize the practice that most rural public transit vehicles already do — stopping at unmarked areas to pick up or drop off riders when it's safe. I think this is a great "do something, cost nothing" idea that can make life better for plenty of people in our community and all over our state.

I was especially pleased to have Martha Rose, the Executive Director of Island Transit and Bob Clay, Island Transit Board Chairman and Town Council Member from Coupeville visit the Senate to support this legislation. You can see their testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee online at <http://blog.senatedemocrats.wa.gov/haugen/helping-rural-transit-help-you/>.

PASSENGER-ONLY SERVICE ON PORT TOWNSEND/KEYSTONE ROUTE TO CONTINUE THROUGH MID-FEBRUARY

The *Steilacoom II* went into drydock the first week of January, and Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WSF) and Pierce County expected the vessel to be out of service for approximately four weeks.

However, Todd Pacific Shipyards repair crews recently discovered that additional work is needed on the vessel, which will extend its drydock period for a couple of weeks.

WSF will continue to provide passenger-only service on the Port Townsend/Keystone route through mid-February, with auto service aboard the *Steilacoom II* anticipated to return on Sunday, Feb. 15.

WSF will extend its contract with Mystic Sea Charters of Anacortes, which has been providing passenger-only service since Jan. 5 on the 77-passenger *Mystic Sea*. The temporary passenger-only schedule will continue while the *Mystic Sea* is serving the route. WSF designed the schedule to coordinate as closely as possible with transit service on both sides of the route.

Customers can receive updates on Port Townsend/Keystone service, as well as other routes, by signing up for free e-mail alerts. To sign up, and for more ferry system information, please visit the WSDOT Ferries Division Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

My executive assistant Nova Gattman, legislative assistant Gina Bull and intern Beau Perschbacher are available to provide constituent services to the people of our community, so please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns whether they involve bills before the Legislature or topics you feel are being overlooked.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618**. If you have a concern, I want to hear it.

In the meantime, please visit my [webpage](#) for up-to-date info on what's happening at the Legislature.

Until next week — Take Care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

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